

Substitute for House Resolution No 236.

A resolution to declare March 8, 2016, as International Women's Day in the state of Michigan.

Whereas, March 8, 2016, marks the 105th anniversary of the celebration of International Women's Day. Originally called International Working Women's Day, it is celebrated on March 8 of every year; and

Whereas, International Women's Day is a global day celebrating the economic, political, and social achievements of women in the past, present, and future. It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements, regardless of divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic, or political. It is an occasion for looking back on past struggles and accomplishments and, more importantly, for looking ahead to the untapped potential and opportunities that await future generations of women; and

Whereas, In different regions the focus of the celebrations ranges from general celebration of respect, appreciation, and love towards women to a celebration for women's economic, political, and social achievements; and

Whereas, The earliest Women's Day observance was held in 1909 in New York and was organized in remembrance of the 1908 strike of the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union. At the second International Women's Conference in 1910, the first International Women's Day was officially established to promote equal rights, including suffrage, for women. The following year, International Women's Day was marked by over a million people in Austria, Denmark, Germany, and Switzerland. The efforts of early European pioneers led to women gaining the right to vote and to hold public office and the establishment of many early prohibitions against employment sex discrimination; and

Whereas, In 1975, during the United Nations (UN) International Year for Women, the UN held its first official celebration of International Women's Day. Two years later, in December 1977, the General Assembly adopted a resolution proclaiming a United Nations Day for Women's Rights and International Peace to be observed by member states. In adopting this resolution, the General Assembly recognized the role of women in peace efforts and development and urged an end to discrimination and an increase of support for women's full and equal participation; and

Whereas, Beginning in 1996, International Women's Day organizers began adopting a theme to each year's celebrations that reinforce its commitment to women's rights and world peace. Successful campaigns centered on such themes as "Celebrating the Past, Planning for the Future" (1996) and "Women in Decision-Making" (2006); and

Whereas, On the occasion of 2010 International Women's Day, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) drew attention to the hardships displaced women endure by spreading awareness of the displacement of populations as one of the gravest consequences of today's armed conflicts. President Barack Obama later proclaimed March 2011 to be Women's History Month, calling Americans to mark International Women's Day by reflecting on "the extraordinary accomplishments of women" in shaping the country's history; and

Whereas, This year's theme, "Pledge for Parity," is committed to "helping women advance equal to their numbers and realize the limitless potential they offer economies the world over"; and

Whereas, There are more than 3.5 billion women in the world today. Women around the world participate in the political, social, and economic life of their communities, play a critical role in providing and caring for their families, contribute substantially to the growth of

economies, and, as both farmers and caregivers, play an important role in advancing food security for their communities; and

Whereas, The advancement of women is a public policy priority for our country and the state of Michigan and the ability of women to realize their full potential is critical to the ability of a country and state to achieve strong and lasting economic growth and social stability; and

Whereas, According to the International Monetary Fund, “focusing on the needs and empowerment of women is one of the keys to human development” and according to the 2012 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Report, “reducing gender inequality enhances productivity and economic growth”; and

Whereas, According to the World Bank 2012 World Development Report: Gender Equality and Development, “greater gender equality is also smart economics, enhancing productivity and improving other development outcomes, including prospects for the next generation and for the quality of societal policies and institutions”; and

Whereas, Although strides have been made in recent decades, women around the world continue to face significant obstacles in all aspects of their lives, including underrepresentation in all aspects of public life, denial of basic human rights, and discrimination; and

Whereas, Despite some achievements by individual women leaders, women around the world are still vastly underrepresented in high level positions and in national and local legislatures and governments and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, women account for only 22 percent of national parliamentarians; and

Whereas, Women remain underrepresented in conflict prevention and conflict resolution efforts, despite proven successes by women in conflict-affected regions in moderating violent extremism, resolving disputes through non-violent mediation and negotiation, and stabilizing their societies by improving access to peace and security services, institutions, and decision-making venues; and

Whereas, According to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the majority of women living in rural areas of the developing world are heavily engaged in agricultural labor, yet they receive less credit, land, agricultural inputs, and training than their male counterparts; and

Whereas, It is imperative to alleviate violence and discrimination against women and afford them every opportunity to be full and productive members of their communities; and

Whereas, March 8 is recognized each year as International Women's Day, a global day to celebrate the economic, political, and social achievements of women past, present, and future, and a day to recognize the obstacles that women still face in the struggle for equal rights and opportunities; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives, That the members of this legislative body declare March 8, 2016, as International Women's Day in the state of Michigan. We support the goals of International Women's Day, recognize that the empowerment of women is inextricably linked to the potential of countries to generate economic growth, sustainable democracy, and inclusive security, honor the women in the United States and around the world who have worked throughout history to ensure that women are guaranteed equality and basic human rights, reaffirm the movement's commitment to ending discrimination and violence against women and girls, to ensuring the safety and welfare of women and girls, and to pursuing policies that guarantee the basic human rights of women and girls worldwide, and encourage the people of Michigan to observe International Women's Day with appropriate programs and activities.